Lincoln-Lancaster Co. SAFE KIDS COALITION

Lincoln-Lancaster County SAFE KIDS Coalition

3140 N Street • Lincoln, NE 68510 • Phone - 441-8046 • Fax - 441-8323

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

RECREATIONAL INJURY

Like organized sports, recreational activity can improve physical fitness, coordination, self-discipline and teamwork, as well as promote a sense of personal satisfaction and accomplishment. However, many recreational activities – such as inline skating, snow skiing, water tubing, skateboarding and horseback riding, among others – pose the risk of unintentional physical injury. Children are more susceptible to these injuries because they are still growing and gaining motor and cognitive skills.

RECREATION DEATHS AND INJURIES

- More than 3.5 million children ages 14 and under suffer from sports- and recreation-related injuries each year. Death among children during participation in sports activities is rare.
- Brain injury is the leading cause of sports- and recreation-related death. Injuries associated with participation in sports and recreational activities account for 21 percent of all traumatic brain injuries among children in the United States.
- Nearly half of all sports- and recreation-related head injuries to children are caused by bicycle, skating and skateboard incidents.
- Water recreation is associated with three-fourths of all recreation-related deaths.

WHEN AND WHERE RECREATIONAL INJURIES OCCUR

- Young children, especially ages 5 to 9, are more likely to sustain playground- and bicycle-related injuries. Older children are more likely to suffer from bicycle- and sports-related injuries and overexertion.
- Collision and contact sports are associated with higher rates of injury. However, injuries from recreational activities and individual sports tend to be more severe.

Wheel Activities

- In 2001, 134 children ages 14 and under died in bicycle-related crashes. In 2002, nearly 274,800 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for bicycle-related injuries.
- Since 1992, at least 87 children ages 14 and under have died from inline skating injuries; the majority of these deaths were from collisions with motor vehicles. In 2002, nearly 36,300 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for inline skating-related injuries and an estimated 28,400 were treated for roller skating-related injuries.
- In 2002, nearly 51,300 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for non-powered scooter-related injuries. Children ages 5 to 14 accounted for nearly 75 percent of these injuries.
- In 2002, at least 44 children ages 14 and under died and nearly 30,300 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for all-terrain vehicle-related injuries. ATV-related injuries are six times more likely to result in hospitalization and 12 times more likely to result in death compared to bicyclerelated injuries.
- In 2002, more than 60,100 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for skateboard-related injuries. Six out of every ten skateboarding injuries occur among children ages 14 and under.

Winter Recreation

- In 2002, more than 13,700 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for ice skating-related injuries, and nearly 13,400 were treated for sledding-related injuries.
- In 2002, nearly 1,400 children ages 14 and under were treated for snowmobile-related injuries. From 1992 to 1997, at least 51 children ages 16 and under were killed in snowmobile-related incidents.
- In 2002, nearly 17,700 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for snow skiing-related injuries and nearly 22,900 were treated for snowboarding-related injuries. Approximately 22 percent of ski and snowboard head injuries are serious enough to cause loss of consciousness or a concussion.

Water Recreation

- In 2002, nearly 4,600 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for water skiing, tubing and surfingrelated injuries.
- In 2002, at least 16 children ages 14 and under drowned in recreational boating-related incidents and more than 189 sustained personal watercraft-related injuries.

Other Recreational Activities

- In 2002, more than 215,500 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for playground equipment-related injuries. Children ages 5 to 14 accounted for nearly 75 percent of these injuries.
- In 2002, nearly 74,600 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for trampoline-related injuries. The majority of trampoline injuries are the result of colliding with other jumpers, falling from or onto the trampoline, or doing stunts. More than 90 percent of trampoline-related injuries occur at home, and the injuries predominantly involve the extremities.
- In 2002, more than 13,400 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for horseback riding-related injuries.
- In 2002, more than 8,080 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for amusement park-related injuries

WHO IS AT RISK

- Non-Hispanic white children and children from affluent families are at increased risk of recreational injury, primarily due to the financial investment required for involvement in many injury-causing sport and recreation activities.
- Children are at greater risk than adults for recreational injuries, because they are unable to assess the risks involved and have less coordination, slower reaction times and less accuracy.
- Children develop at different rates, both physically and psychologically. A less developed child competing against a more mature child of the same age and weight is at a disadvantage and may be at greater risk for injury.
- Children who do not wear or use protective equipment, particularly helmets, are at greater risk of sustaining recreational injuries. Lack of awareness about potential injury, inappropriate or unavailable equipment, and lack of money to purchase equipment are some of the reasons children do not use protective gear. In a national survey that asked children ages 8 to 12 why they choose not to wear a helmet for wheeled sports, 47 percent reported that they only ride near home and 43 percent cited “helmets are uncomfortable.” Unlike organized team sports, recreational activities generally do not have helmet requirements.

SPORTS INJURY PREVENTION EFFECTIVENESS

- Protective equipment, safe playing conditions (e.g., field surfacing, maintenance) and development and enforcement of safety rules help reduce the number and severity of recreational injuries.

PREVENTION TIPS

- Children should always wear appropriate safety gear and drink an adequate amount of liquids when participating in recreational activities.
- Make sure proper physical and psychological conditioning, use of appropriate safety equipment, a safe playing environment, adequate adult supervision and enforced safety rules are included in any recreational activity program.

National SAFE KIDS Campaign (NSKC). Recreational Injury Fact Sheet. Washington (DC): NSKC, 2004.